

REMARKS

Claims 1-29 are pending, with claims 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, 27, and 29 being independent. Claims 15-25 and 29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,885,074 to Susko et al. (Susko) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,431,112 to Sill (Sill) and U.S. Patent No. 5,824,606 to Dible (Dible). Claims 26-28 are allowed.

Claims 15, 18, 20, and 22, are amended by virtue of this amendment, and claims 17, 19, and 23 have been cancelled. No new matter has been added.

Regarding the rejection of claims 15-25 and 29, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited prior art of Susko, Sill, and Dible, whether taken alone or in any combination, discloses or properly suggests all of the features of at least independent claims 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 29.

For example, independent claim 15, as amended, recites, “An etching method *using an ICP etching apparatus...* (and comprising) ... applying a first high-frequency power to said coil electrode ... *wherein said first high-frequency power is an ICP power ...*” Note that claim 15 also recites, “a lower electrode comprising at least first and second electrodes” for supporting an etched substrate.

Independent claims 18 and 20, as amended, similarly recite the use of an ICP power as the recited first high-frequency power. Independent claim 22, as amended, recites, “...generating plasma between said coil electrode and said first and second electrodes by *using at least an ICP power...*” Claims 18, 20, and 22 also recite the use of a plurality of (lower) electrodes for supporting a substrate.

Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited prior art, taken alone or in combination, discloses or properly suggests at least the above features. For example, Susko discloses a parallel-plate type etching apparatus, and, Applicant submits, does not disclose or properly suggest applying an ICP power to a coil electrode, generating a plasma using ICP power, and/or an ICP etching apparatus provided with a plurality of lower electrodes. Moreover, Applicant submits that neither Sill nor Dible cures these defects of Susko.

Regarding the Examiner's comments on page 7, lines 1-10, Applicant acknowledges that the Examiner has taken the position that certain features recited in dependent claims 17, 19, 21, 23, and 25 (of which 17, 19, and 23 are cancelled by virtue of this response) would have been obvious variations of Applicant's recited claims. As basis for this position, the Examiner alleges that the features are well-known, and notes that, in Applicant's previous response(s), "Applicant did not traverse the aforementioned conventionality."

Regarding the latter point, Applicant respectfully submits that, for example, in the response file February 9, 2004, Applicant stated Applicant's position that "independent claims 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 29 are allowable ... so that dependent claims 16, 17, 19, 21, 23, and 25 are allowable for at least the same reasons." Based on this position, Applicant submits that it was not necessary for Applicant to individually traverse or otherwise address the remaining dependent claims. Accordingly, Applicant submits that this position does not, in any way, suggest assent to, or agreement with, the Examiner's position, nor does this position restrict Applicant's right to address the features of these claims, or to object to the Examiner's position with respect to these claim features. In fact, Applicant submits that mere statements that features are well-known and would have been used "to provide their art-recognized advantages" are insufficient to support a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Regarding independent claim 24, Applicant notes that this claim recites, "... dividing said substrate in order to obtain a plurality of substrates..." The Office Action does not appear to address this claim limitation, and, in particular, does not cite any reference as disclosing or suggesting this feature. Since a proper rejection under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) must disclose or suggest all of the recited features of a claim, and since none of Susko, Sill, or Dible (whether taken alone or in combination) disclose or properly suggest the above-recited feature, Applicant submits that claim 24 is allowable for at least this reason.

Regarding independent claim 29, Applicant notes that claim 29 recites, "providing at least first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and coil electrodes and at least first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth high-power sources independently connected to **each** of said first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and coil electrodes, said coil electrode overlapped with said first, second, third,

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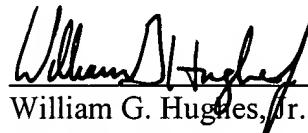
fourth, and fifth electrodes; disposing a substrate on said first, second, third, fourth and fifth electrodes provided in a chamber, wherein said first electrode is located below a central portion of said substrate and second, third, fourth and fifth electrodes are located below corner portions of said substrate..." Thus, even assuming for the sake of argument that the Office Action is otherwise correct regarding claim 29, Applicant submits that none of Susko, Sill, or Dible, whether taken alone or in combination, disclose or properly suggest at least the feature of independently providing an electrode and a high-power source at **each** corner portion of a substrate, as recited in claim 29.

Based on the above, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claims 15, 18, 20, 22, 24, and 29 are allowable for at least the above reasons, so that dependent claims 16, 21, and 25 are allowable for at least the same reasons. Since claims 26-28 have been allowed, all claims are therefore believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is hereby requested in the Examiner's next official communication.

Enclosed is a \$420.00 check for the Two-Month Petition for Extension of Time fee. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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